

# **September 1993**

## **Preliminary Data Summary**

by      Field Research Facility

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Waterways Experiment Station  
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## Preface

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This report provides a summary of basic oceanographic, meteorological and bottom profile data for the month. The data were obtained as part of the Measurements and Analysis work units at the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Coastal Engineering Research Center's Field Research Facility (FRF) in Duck, North Carolina. The FRF staff collected and analyzed these data. These summaries are intended to make the data readily available to all FRF users, and comments on their content and usefulness are invited.

*Author's note:*

*The gauges of the "8-Meter Array" were being replaced this month. A self-recording pressure gauge and current meter (gauges 3551, 3559, 551, 559, 569) were substituted for the "8-Meter Array" (3111) and for the FRF pressure gauge and current meter (gauges 511, 519, 529). The affected dates are for the 1st through the 23rd of September.*

# 1 Introduction

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The U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Coastal Engineering Research Center's (CERC) Field Research Facility (FRF) is located on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, near the village of Duck (Figure 1).

The FRF research program provides a means for obtaining high-quality field data, particularly during storms, in support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' coastal engineering research missions. The research pier is a reinforced concrete structure supported on 0.9-m-diam steel piles spaced 12.2 m apart along the pier's length and 4.6 m apart across the width. The pier deck is 6.1 m wide and extends from behind the duneline to about the 6-m water depth contour at a height of 7.75 m above the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) of the year 1929.

One of the responsibilities of the FRF research program is the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on local bathymetric, oceanographic, and meteorological conditions. This summary is intended to provide basic data as soon as possible after they are obtained. Questions and/or comments concerning the data may be directed to Mr. Clifford F. Baron at (919) 261-3511.

Chapter 2 presents the meteorological data; Chapters 3 through 6 present oceanographic data; Chapter 7 presents nearshore profiles and bathymetry; and Chapter 8, if included, documents special events that occurred at the FRF during the month.

Table 1 is a list of instruments used and their operational status during the month. Table 2 and Figure 3 identifies the location of the instruments. Figure 2 shows weather and ocean conditions for the month. The water depths at the wave gauges and current meters vary and may be determined from information contained in Figure 9. Other installation information is contained in Table 1.

Times given in the report are referenced to eastern standard time (EST).

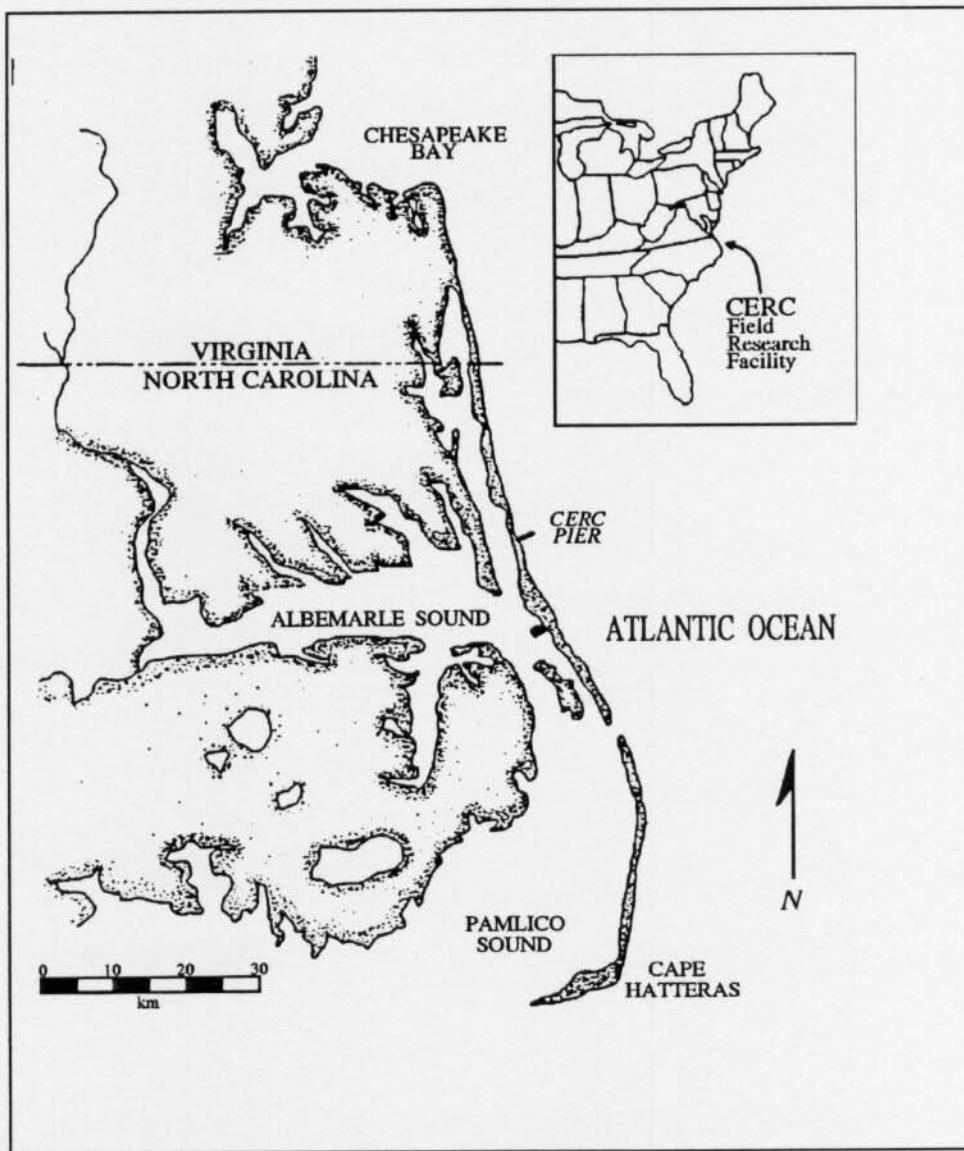


Figure 1. FRF Location Map

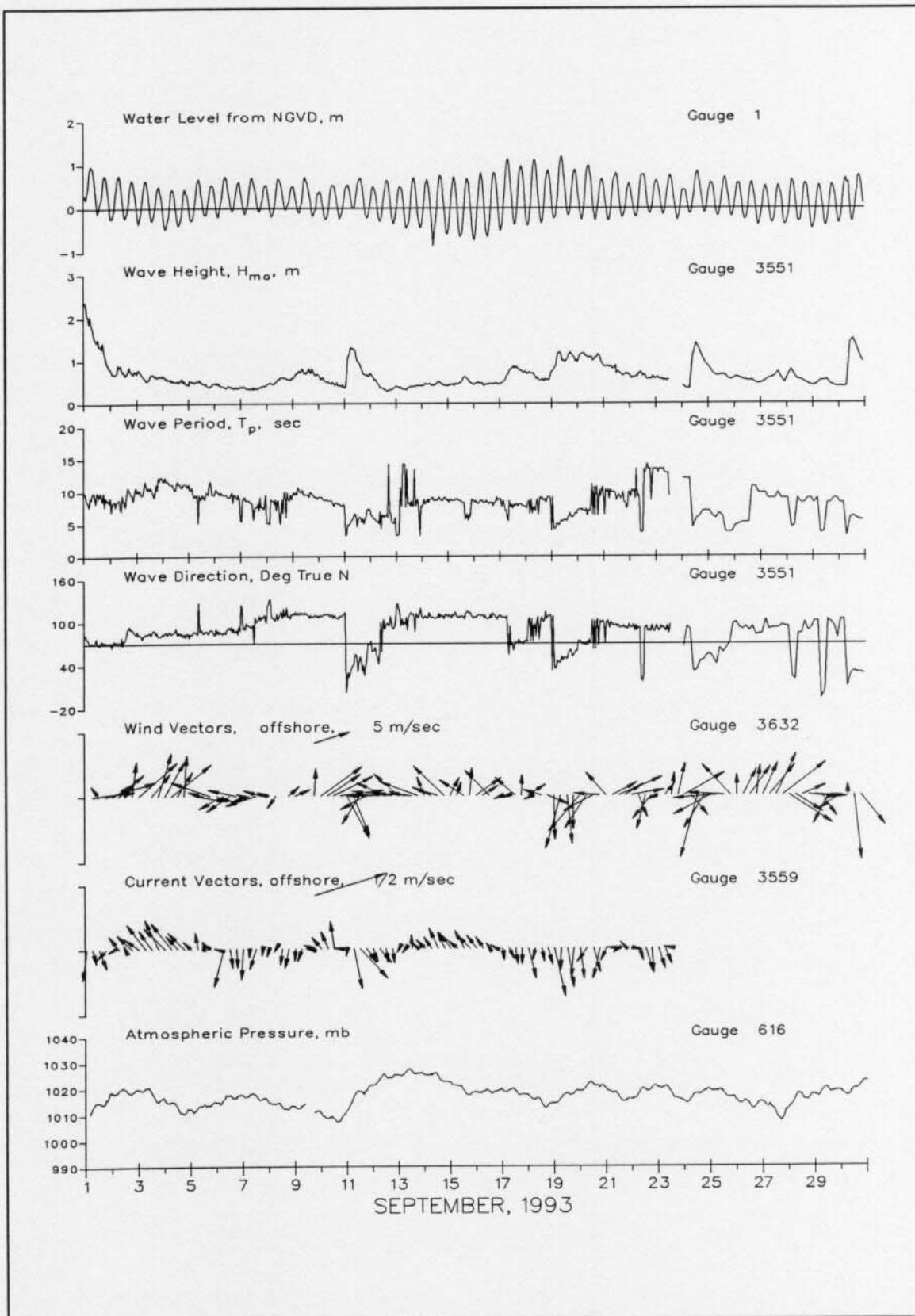


Figure 2. Month at a Glance



**Table 2**  
**Gauge Locations**

Gauge ID	Description	Latitude Degrees N	Longitude Degrees W	FRF Coordinates X, m Y, m		Gauge Depth NGVD, m	Water Depth NGVD, m
616	Barometer	36 10' 45.48"	75 44' 37.39"	11.60	569.00	----	-----
632	Building Anemometer	36 10' 45.24"	75 44' 39.53"	21.45	515.83	19.94	-----
932	EOP Anemometer	36 11' 2.64"	75 44' 46.50"	585.20	517.30	19.5	-----
641	780 Pressure	36 10' 51.96"	75 44' 42.21"	239.11	516.64	-1.64	-1.96
625	1860 Baylor	36 11' 2.10"	75 44' 46.31"	568.00	516.64	Surface	-8.36
3111	8m Array	36 11' 15.90"	75 44' 38.88"	914.43	825.52	-7.76	-8.08
511	Pressure N Tripod	36 11' 17.17"	75 44' 34.15"	914.76	950.00	-6.70	-7.90
630	Waverider	36 12' 16.44"	75 47' 19.23"	3934.96	-2400.81	Surface	-17.0
519	Current N tripod	36 11' 17.17"	75 44' 34.15"	914.76	950.00	-5.30	-7.90
1	NOAA Tide	36 11' 2.95"	75 44' 46.76	596.49	514.2	Surface	-7.62

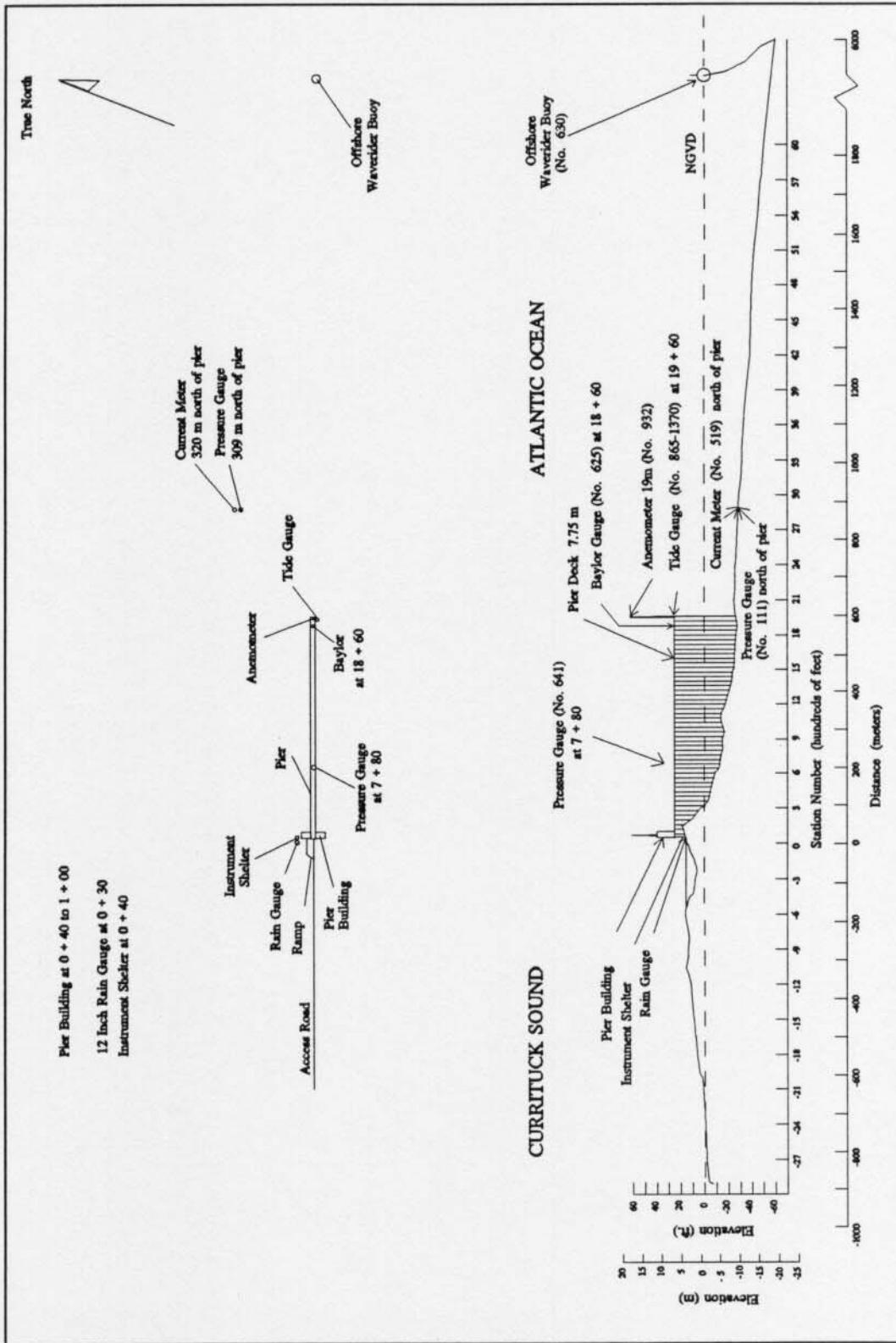


Figure 3. Instrument Locations, Elevations From NGVD

## 2 Meteorological Data

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A variety of instruments have been installed at the FRF (Figure 3) to monitor the meteorological conditions. The data presented in Table 3 are collected and stored using a Digital Equipment Corporation VAX 11/750. For each instrument identified in Table 1, a log is maintained and the records are stored for future reference.

Winds were measured at the end of the pier at an elevation of 19 m (Figure 4) using a WeatherMeasure Skyvane anemometer. Monthly resultant wind speeds and directions are determined by vector averaging the data. Wind directions indicate where the wind is coming from. Temperature and atmospheric pressure means are the average of the values presented for the month. Total precipitation is the sum for the month.

The following may be useful for converting the data in Table 3 to other frequently used units of measurement:

1. Millimeters (mm) to inches (in.) -  
 $mm \times .03937 = in.$
2. Millibars (mb) to inches of mercury (in. Hg) -  
 $mb \times 0.02953 = in. Hg$
3. Degrees Celsius (C) to degrees Fahrenheit (F) -  
 $(C \times 9/5) + 32 = F$
4. Meters per second (m/s) to knots (kn) -  
 $m/s \times 1.943 = kn$

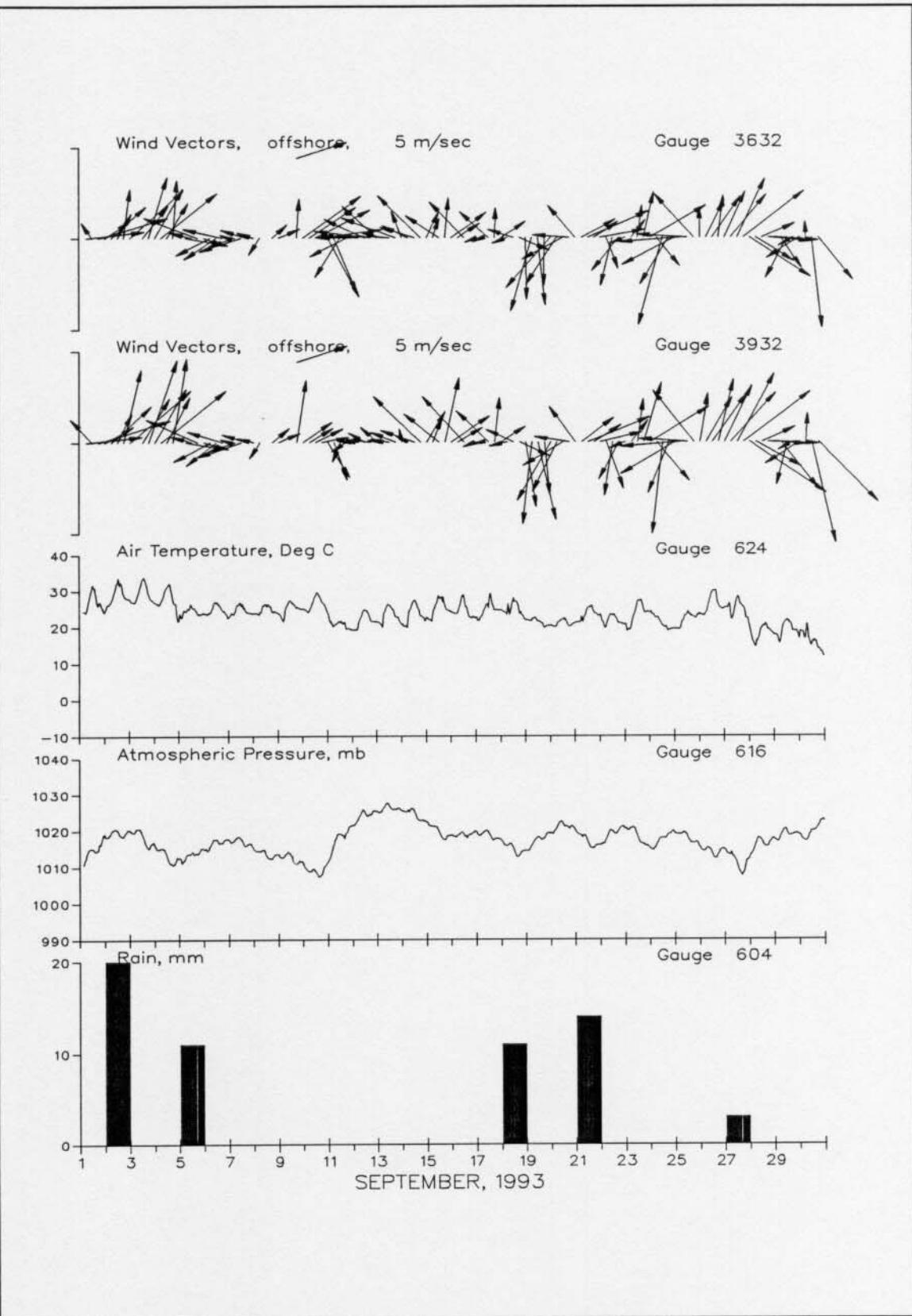


Figure 4. Meteorological Monthly Summary







### 3 Wave Data

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Wave data are collected from a Baylor staff gauge (Gauge 625), two pressure wave gauges (641 and 511) and a Waverider buoy (Gauge 630) as shown in Table 1 and Figure 3. The data are collected, analyzed, and stored on optical disc using a Digital Equipment Corporation VAX 11/750 programmed to sample the gauges for two hour and forty-eight minute time frames. The sampling rate is two times per second which equals five contiguous 34 minute records per collection period. This report reflects the data collection periods of 0100, 0700, 1300, and 1900 EST. The results are based only on the first 34 minute record.

Wave height  $H_{mo}$  is an energy-based statistic equal to four times the standard deviation of the sea surface elevations. Wave height reported from the pressure gauge has been compensated for hydrodynamic attenuation using linear wave theory. Wave period is identified from the computation of a variance (energy) spectrum with 60 deg of freedom calculated from a 34-min record. Peak wave period  $T_p$  is defined as the period associated with the maximum energy in the spectrum. When this analysis is complete, the data are written to optical disc.

Table 4 presents the wave heights and periods for each wave record obtained at 6 hr intervals during the month. The monthly means and standard deviations from the means shown in Table 4 are average values computed from this data. Figure 5 is a time history of all  $H_{mo}$  and  $T_p$  values obtained for all gauges.

Differences in wave periods between wave gauges (Table 4 and Figure 5) may be the result of wave breaking, wave reformation, the presence of multiple wave trains containing nearly equal energy, and statistical variations in spectral estimations.







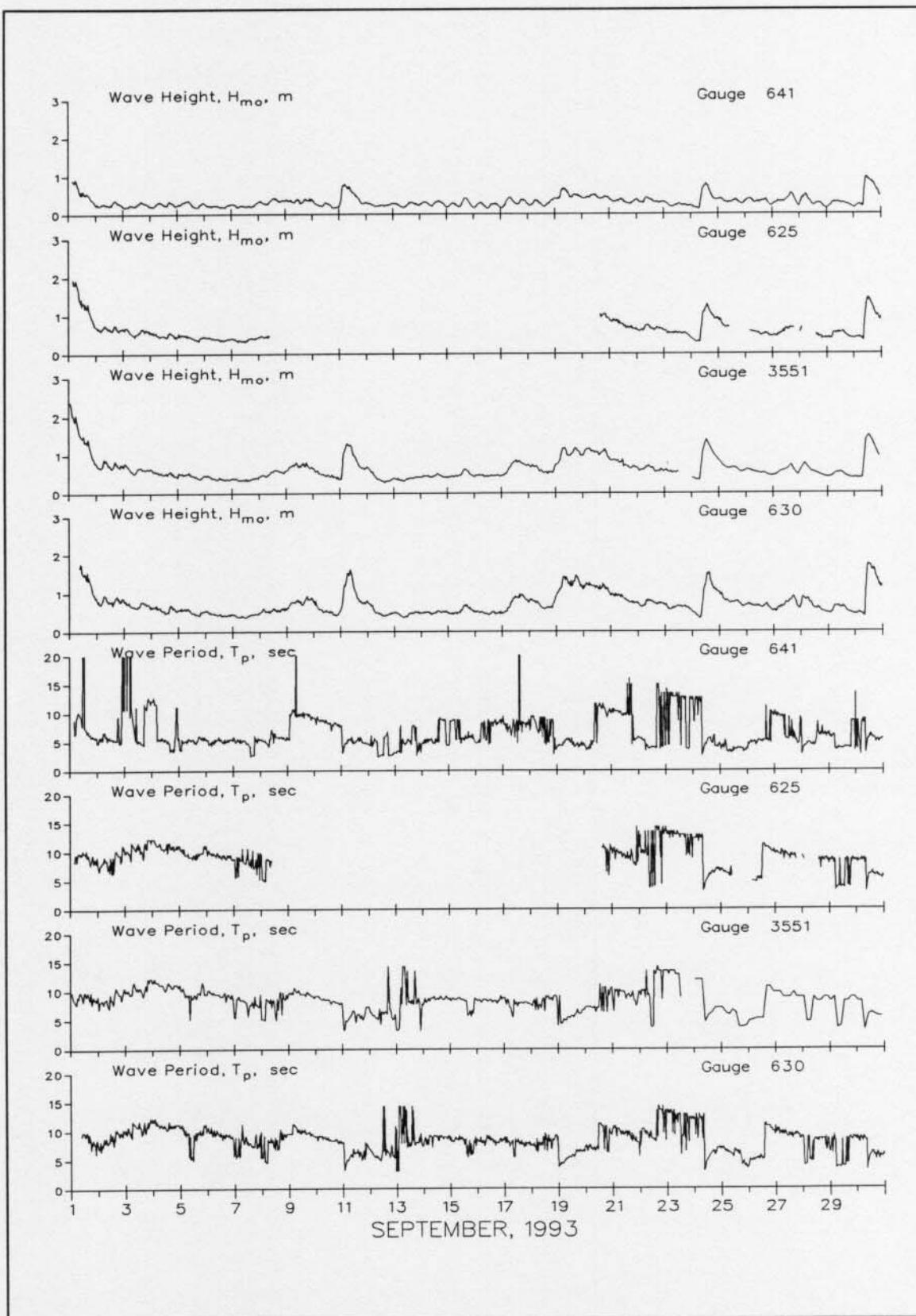


Figure 5. Time History of Wave Heights and Periods

## 4 Current Data

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Current data (Table 5) are collected from a Marsh-McBirney electromagnetic biaxial current meter and by visually observing the movement of dye on the water surface in the surf and at the seaward end of the pier, as well as 500 m updrift of the pier, approximately 12 m offshore (Table 6).

Since the shoreline orientation is approximately N20W, longshore currents flow either toward 340 deg (i.e. northward) or toward 160 deg (i.e. southward). Similarly, cross-shore currents are either onshore (westward) or off-shore (eastward). All current speeds are given in centimeters per second (cm/sec). Resultant speeds and directions are determined by vector averaging the cross-shore and longshore data. Current directions indicate the direction that the current is moving towards.





## 5 Visual Observations

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Visual wave direction measurements (Table 7) of both the primary wave train (i.e. that having the higher wave heights) and the secondary wave train (which must be clearly distinguishable as a wave train separate from the primary waves but not surface chop or capillary waves) are taken daily at the seaward end of the pier. The direction of the primary wave train just north of the seaward end of the pier is also determined using a Raytheon Marine Pathfinder radar and measuring the alignment of the wave crests at approximately the same location as the visual measurements. The pier axis (considered perpendicular to the beach at the FRF) is oriented 70 deg east of true north; consequently, wave angles greater than 70 deg indicate that the waves were coming from the south side of the pier.

The width of the surf zone (seawardmost breaker position to shoreline) is determined from the pier deck.

Measurements of surface water temperature, density, and visibility are also taken daily at the seaward end of the pier. A Bucket Thermometer is lowered about 0.3 m into the water and allowed to remain for at least one minute. The temperature is then read, and a hydrometer is used to determine the density. A Secchi disc is used to determine the depth of visibility.



## 6 Water Levels

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Since 1978, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Ocean Service (NOS) has operated a primary tide station (No. 865-1370) at the seaward end of the FRF pier. A Leupold-Stevens digital recording float-type tide gauge is used to collect instantaneous water level data every 6 minutes throughout the month.

The variation in water level during the month is shown in Figure 6 along with a list of means and extreme values. This presentation is useful in identifying effects of both meteorological and astronomical forces on the open coast water level. Table 7 contains the range, high, low, and mean water level for each 12.42-hr tidal cycle.

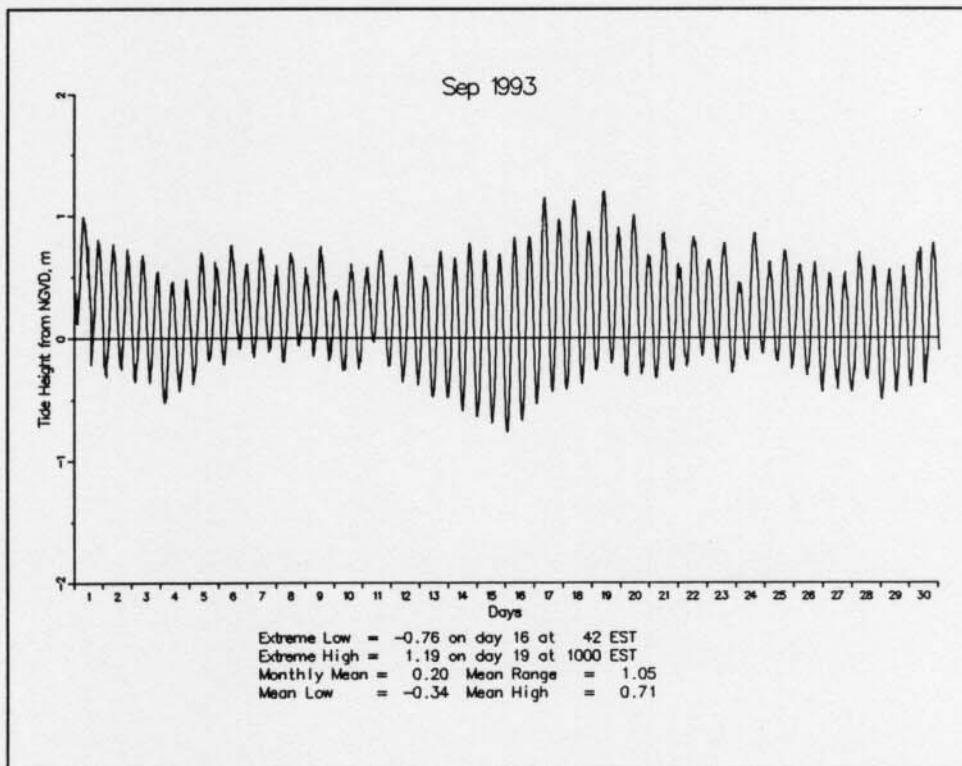


Figure 6. Water Level Time History



## 7 Bathymetry

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A. Nearshore Profiles. In order to document profile response away from the pier, surveys of four profile lines extending 900 to 1,000 m from shore and located 489 and 581 m north and 517 and 608 m south of the FRF pier are conducted bi-weekly, after storms, and during more complete bathymetric surveys.

These profiles are obtained using the CRAB-Geodimeter surveying system; a Geodimeter 140-T self-tracking, electronic theodolite, distance meter, in combination with the Coastal Research Amphibious Buggy (CRAB), a 10.7 m high, self-powered, mobile tripod on wheels.

Figure 7 shows the last survey in August 1993 and the survey(s) in September 1993 on profile line 188, located 517 m south of the pier.

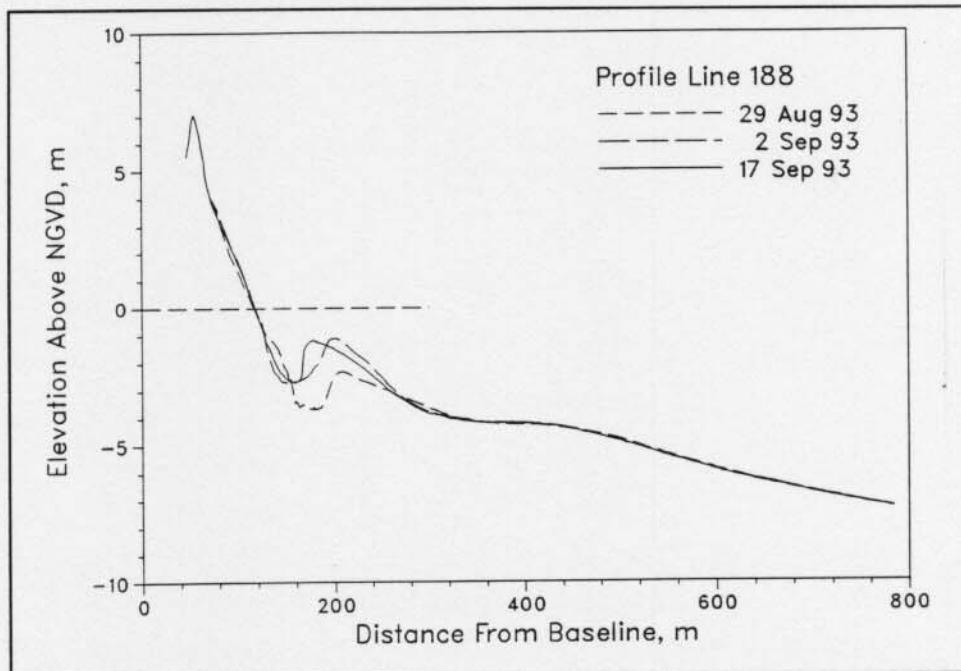


Figure 7. Monthly CRAB Profiles on Profile Line 188.

The profile envelope (Figure 8) reflects the maximum changes that occurred on the profile during 1993. Cross-hatched areas indicate changes to the annual envelope which occurred in September.

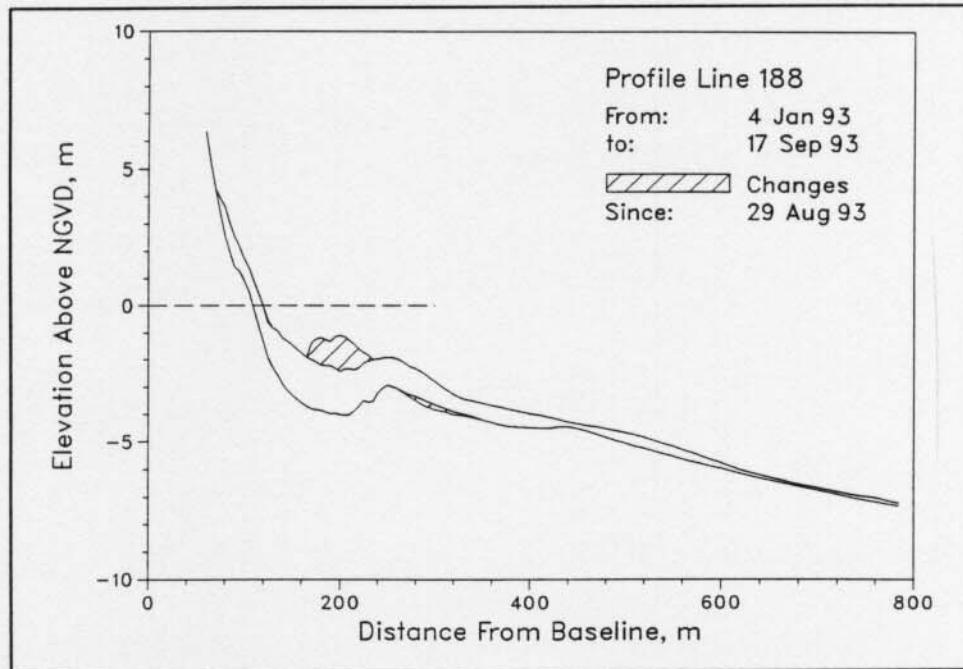


Figure 8. Profile Envelope - Profile Line 188.

B. Bathymetry. Figure 9 includes a two- and three-dimensional contour map and a change plot derived from the bathymetric survey on 2 September. Wide contour lines on the change diagram represent eroded areas; thin lines indicate deposition.

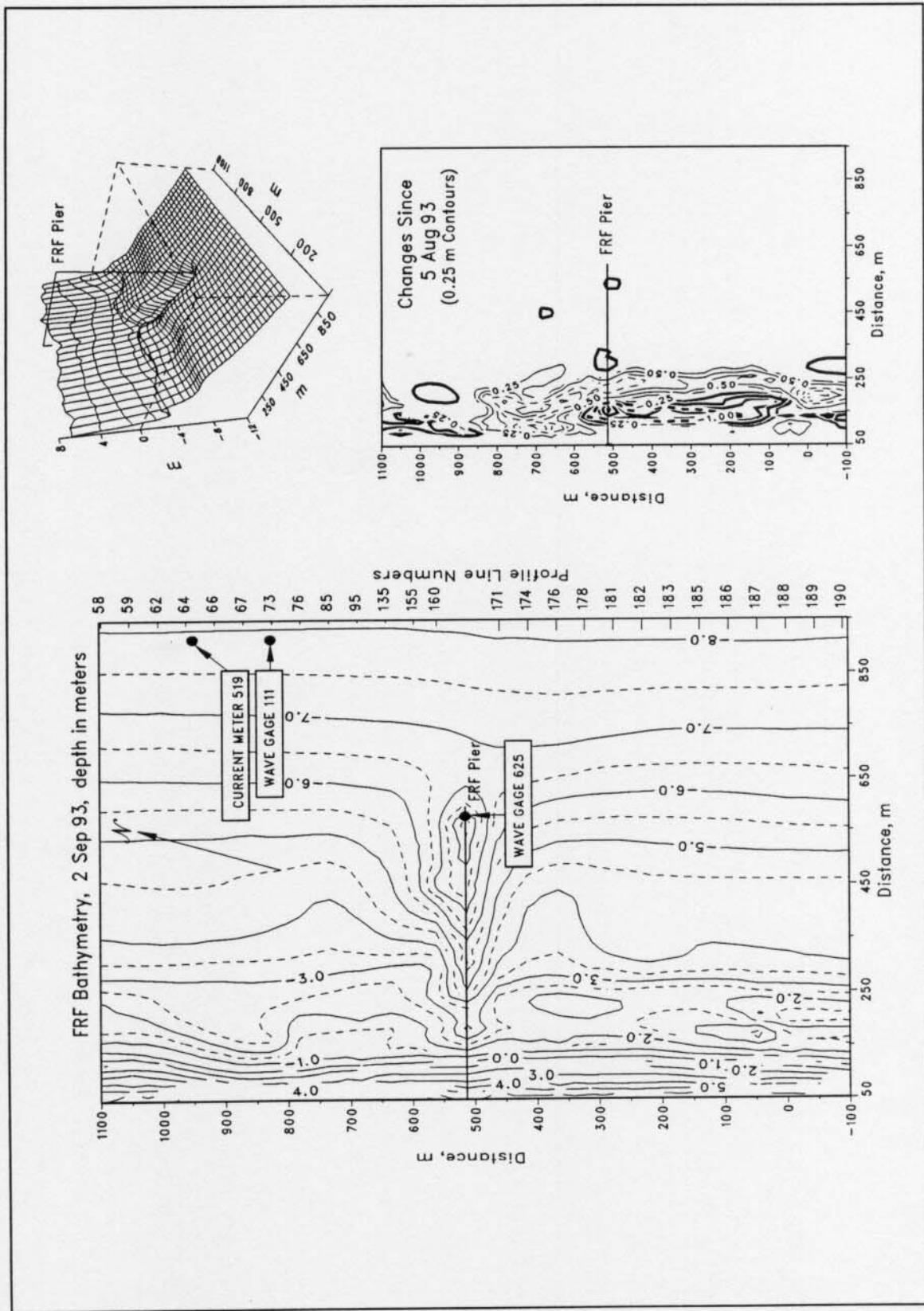


Figure 9. FRF Bathymetry, Depths Relative to NGVD

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